

Is all art political?

Contemporary British artists and their responses modern politics.

Extended Curatorial Rationale

Word Count: 10,876

Kelsey Wood

BA Hons Interior Design 23/24

Glasgow School of Art

SYNOPSIS

In this extended curatorial rationale, I explore the artistic responses of contemporary artists to the political landscape in Conservative Britain. In the form of a short essay, Part One, questions the notion, that all art is political by comparing varied opinions of industry professionals and sets the timeline for the pieces selected in the exhibition, *Enough*, to provide a contextual background of contemporary art.

In Part Two, this curatorial rationale explores methods of artistic response that contemporary artists use, highlighting their value as political commentary in society. Part Two analyses the artworks selected for *Enough*, exploring their contribution to British visual culture.

In Part Three, the public exhibition *Enough* is realised, presented, and critically evaluated as I navigate these artistic responses, highlighting the artists views individually and collectively. *Enough* is curated to evoke emotion within the viewer, questioning their political motivations through their consumption of modern-day art.

Table of Contents

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	4
INTRODUCTION	5
PART ONE	8
The Formation of Contemporary Political Art.....	8
PART TWO	16
Artistic Forms of Political Expression	16
i. Propaganda	17
ii. Socio-Political Expression	19
iii. Protest	21
iv. Satire	25
PART THREE.....	29
The Role of the Curator	29
Enough: Location & Audience	31
Enough: Exhibition & Content Layout.....	36
CONCLUSION	42
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	44

List of Illustrations

Figure 1 – Eddie Chambers, Destruction of the National Front, 1980. Four screenprints on paper and card. Tate Modern Collections.	12
Figure 2 – Ken Currie, Unknown Man, 2019. Oil on canvas. Scottish National Portrait Gallery...	14
Figure 3 – Darren Cullen, Anti-Tory Propaganda: Neoliberalism Isn't Working, 2019. Illustration printed on poster paper. Spelling Mistakes Cost Lives Archive (Artists Own Website)	17
Figure 4 – Jenny Saville, Aleppo, 2018. Pastel and charcoal on canvas. National Galleries Scotland Archive.	19
Figure 5 – Banksy, Vote to Love, 2016. Spray paint on UKIP placard mounted on board. Sotheby's Private Collection.	21
Figure 6 – kennardphillips, Blue Murder, 2013. 24 pigment ink and charcoal on newspaper prints. kennardphillips Website.	23
Figure 7 – Cold War Steve, Untitled, 2022. Digital photo montage image. Artists own website. ...	25
Figure 8 – kennardphillips, Photo Op, 2005. Photo-lithographic print on 60gsm paper. Artists own website.	27
Figure 9 – British Election Study, 2021. A hierarchal Bayesian-style table examined the turnout reported by age at the 2015, 2017 and 2019 elections. British Election Study Website.	31
Figure 10 – Glasgow Central Station concourse with crowd, April 2016. Photograph. Network Rail Website.	33
Figure 11 – Technical drawing of Glasgow Central Station main concourse, 2017. Glasgow City Council Planning Application Document Portal, Application 17/03247/DC, Drawing Reference 17081-GLC 01.	34
Figure 12 – Annotated illustration of proposed exhibition layout highlighting location of artworks and lighting, flow of viewer movement and viewing space given per each artwork.	36
Figure 13 – Image of 1:20 scale model showing entryway and first artwork. Printed artworks on 3mm white acrylic.	37
Figure 14 – Image of 1:20 scale model showing corridor with Photo Op projected at the opposite end. Printed artworks on 3mm white acrylic.	39
Figure 15 – Image of 1:20 scale model showing room containing Aleppo and the viewers journey on to Destruction of the National Front. Printed artworks on 3mm white acrylic.	40

Introduction

There is a lot to be asked of the Conservative Government in the United Kingdom and their age of austerity, an era of reduced public spending that began in 2010, considered the new normal¹. The limitations surrounding art, art production, and art education have always been protected from government intervention by an 'arm's length' policy in place since 1946². There is, however, a narrative that the 'Tories hate art'³, therefore, increasingly privately funded bodies are supporting the arts as the government continues to reduce funding⁴. This extended curatorial rationale (ECR) explores the relationship between contemporary artists and politics through the eyes of their artistic responses to political events, asking, is all art political? Art is valuable to the economy and culture of the country⁵. Moreover, artists are free to respond to the workings of the world around them in any way they see fit. Exploring these artistic responses in depth, this ECR considers their importance to society as political commentary, bringing a few select pieces together into a curated exhibition of emotionally charged works.

To fully comprehend the broad range of political artwork available in visual culture today, I have written this extended curatorial rationale in three parts: the first taking the form of a short discursive essay, defining the period of art in which this ECR will focus on and exploring the roots of contemporary 'political art'. This essay discusses the very definition of political art, considering the question, is all art political? Within Part One, I have focused on the formation of the label political art, exploring the history of contemporary art in Britain. This essay argues the notion that all art is political, exploring opposing critical stances on the topic to investigate if this is the view of the art world today. There is a wide range of sources used across this writing such as articles, newspapers, reports, interviews and publications with varied political beliefs and ideologies. This broad research allows me to provide differing opinions on politics and art. One of the key sources in defining the timeline relevant to this essay is John A Walker's writing in *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain*⁶, a book that offers an insight into the key artists in the 1970s art scene, exploring their contributions to a struggling landscape during a period of political economic crisis and how this paved the way

¹ Hall, 'austerity has its own life – here's how it lives on in future' generations'

² Quinn, 'Distance or intimacy? —The arm's length principle, the British Government, and the Arts Council of Great Britain'

³ Phil, 'Why do the Tories Hate the Arts?'

⁴ Higgins, 'Culture is not trivial, it's about who we are.'

⁵ According to The Centre for Economic and Business Research in a report for the Arts Council England, the arts and culture industry brings £10.9 billion into the UK economy each year.

⁶ Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain*

for contemporary art as we know it. This essay explores why this was the critical period for a shift in public perception of politics. Using this source as a starting point for discussion, this section examines contrasting views on politics such as those of Peter Fuller, Boris Groys and Nate Mancini. This section introduces two artworks and assesses their position within the topic, providing context for their selection within this ECR.

Part Two delves into the ways artists create political commentary and the importance of context by exploring four forms of political art: propaganda, protest, sociological expression, and satire. Through selected artworks, this section analyses their contribution to the broader cultural discourse and their positioning on the political spectrum, allowing a justification for their selection. My understanding of these forms of political art was drawn from writing within the online blog *ArtBuzz*⁷. Although online sources are open to the opinion of the creator, this source reads as a factual definition of the terms, something not dissimilar to an entry you would find in a glossary of terms. This neutral stance is backed up by the fact there is no author named. This source was helpful to me in defining these types of political art and forming my own opinions on which artworks fit the brief. Part Two investigates these art forms and examines how context plays a key role our perceptions of 'political art' as well as considering the importance of the content within political art. This section introduces six pieces of contemporary art that will feature in this curatorial rationale, using various sources of interviews with the artists, their writings, and popular online sources to establish the artists' sentiments. Using sources close to the artists allows my writing to recount a true representation of the artists motivation behind the art, reinforcing their stance on the topic through direct quotes supporting their artistic response.

Part Three of this ECR presents my exhibition, *Enough*. By compiling my essay findings and the artwork selection rationale, *Enough* is an exhibition created to highlight British artistic responses to contemporary political events. This curated collection encourages the viewer to respond to the artwork with their own emotion. The visual culture on display within this curatorial piece is varied and the selection justified through research outlined in Part Two. The role of the curator is explored through two literary sources from David Balzar and Carolee Thea, chosen to support my writing for their in-depth understanding of curating as a key activity within the modern art world. Using these highly credible sources as well as my own understanding of placemaking and spatial design,

⁷ *ArtBuzz* is a global network of hostels, co-working spaces, and an artistic platform to encourage the growth of creativity through collaboration. They provide a series of 'Art Terms' on their website, allowing a further understanding of creative practices and art history.

Enough is physically realised. This section addresses how the exhibition is designed and why the decision to present in this way supports the question of all art being political, encouraging the viewer to consider how they respond to the political landscape. Design decisions are justified throughout with the support of my research into the location, government data and existing public response to previous events. To conclude, this ECR provides my personal response to the question: Is all art political? The Conservative Government can be considered the 'most successful political party in the world'⁸ due to the number of years they have been in control, but how is this success seen within the world of artistic freedom?

⁸ Coulter, 'Book Review: The Conservative Party from Thatcher to Cameron'

Part One

The Formation of Contemporary Political Art

In *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970's Britain*, John A. Walker, introduces the argument that the culture of the arts in Britain in the 1970s was considered 'a neglected decade...especially its fine arts'⁹. The final three decades of the 20th century were rife with ideological struggle within the Government¹⁰, and within these groups of radical artists, there were divides in political agendas. Walker explores the multitudes of radical art practices during this time and discusses the challenges faced by artists under a left-wing government as they tried to create a social purpose within their art practice. The source is an exciting read, opening with the idea that the 70s were a forgotten period of art in Britain, and acts as a chronological recap of art. At first, I found this source challenging to read as each chapter opens with a breakdown of the global political events of that year before a breakdown of art of the same year; it could flow more smoothly for the reader. Walker is very knowledgeable in his experience as an art historian¹¹ and provides a great depth of detail in each chapter, although this source reads as a historical timeline rather than a critical review of the socio-economic happenings. Walker touches on the role of not just the artists but the impacts of the institutions, curators, and art critics who play a vital role in the art scene. To conclude this text, Walker comments on the changes within the fine art world in the following two decades and the influence of politics, mostly exploring the effects of 'Thatcherism'¹² which leads into the timeline for this essay. Walker's final remarks suggest that a resurgence in interest in the radical art of the seventies was the foundation for the modern art world as we know it today to be driven by social purpose, and it is this period of contemporary art that I explore further in this ECR.

The introduction to Walker's book highlights many views of critics that claim the seventies to be a non-starter in terms of art production. One such critic named is the late Peter Fuller - a well-known, combative critic¹³, a fascinating example to include given his journey within his own ideologies. Fuller was known to be uncompromising in his opinions, initially linked heavily to Marxism¹⁴ and radical materialism before shifting drastically to the

⁹ Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain*, p.1

¹⁰ Raymond, 'The 1970s and the Thatcherite Revolution: Crisis of Ideology or Control?'

¹¹ Wikipedia contributors, 'John A. Walker (art critic)'

¹² Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain*, p253- 255

¹³ Jones, 'This Man made Britart what it is. He would have hated it.'

¹⁴ Marxism is defined by *The Economic Times* as a social, economic, and political philosophy that analyses the impact of the ruling class on the laborers, leading to uneven distribution of wealth and privileges in the society. It stimulates the workers to protest the injustice.

right, becoming thoroughly conservative, a 'fierce defender of figurative painting and an enemy of the avant-garde'¹⁵ as described by a colleague at *The Guardian*. Walker's personal journey was almost entirely opposite, starting his career in fine art painting before his Marxist beliefs developed and he became a critic on the most contemporary art of his time. Walker references Fuller's 1980 essay titled *Where was the art of the seventies*¹⁶ in which Fuller almost dismisses all 'modern' art entirely due to lack of traditionalism, a very differing opinion to Walker's:

The art of the 1960's devalued the imaginative, bodily, and expressive potentialities of the artist as a creative, human subject. In focusing upon the physical existence of the artwork in isolation, the late modernism of the 1960s produced works that alienated from men and woman; those damn 'modular units', mere things. The art of the 1970s went further, abandoning tradition and stuff. Expression had been destroyed. Art revealed itself in the conceptualism of the 1970s as a naked ideology¹⁷

The very nature of Walker's book is to challenge this notion, highlighting precisely how drastically art changed during the seventies. During this period, Britain witnessed the birth of contemporary art as we know it¹⁸, with many energising changes in art, particularly concerning politics. Much to Fuller's dismay, critics found themselves 'surrounded by conceptual artists, 'political' artists, and [those] who kept on about art practice and the new media'. They were almost all of the left¹⁹. Art in the seventies saw the rise of individuality and rebellion²⁰, taking heed from the hippie movement of the previous decade, bringing art and politics to the forefront of culture. The '60s established a practice of protesting as freedom of political speech²¹. Creatives no longer wished to be confined by the long-standing traditional limitations of art practice²². Some artistic movements that rose in importance were feminist art, led by those fighting for the equality of women and female artists; land art, raising awareness of environmental issues and encouraging the public to participate in conservation; and performance art, using the body as a tool, communicating a message to challenge traditional art forms²³. Art progressively politicised²⁴, manifesting in 'a decade of austere radical art...the product of a cultural moment'²⁵. When considering the number of

¹⁵ Jones, 'This Man made Britart what it is. He would have hated it.'

¹⁶ Fuller, *Where was the art of the Seventies?* *Beyond the Crisis in Art*, p.16-43

¹⁷ Ibid.,

¹⁸ Anon., 'What is Contemporary Art?'

¹⁹ Fuller, *Where was the art of the Seventies?* *Beyond the Crisis in Art*, p.16-43

²⁰ Rorimer, *New Art in the 60s and 70s: Redefining Reality*, p. 76

²¹ Harris and O'Brien, *Preserving the Sixties Britain and the 'Decade of Protest'*, p.34

²² Silva, '1960's art and the Age of Pop'

²³ Ibid.,

²⁴ Harris and O'Brien, *Preserving the Sixties Britain and the 'Decade of Protest'*, p.193

²⁵ Hilliard, 'British Art in the Seventies – a brief note', p.12-13

collectives and movements that formed during the seventies, each rebelling against the societal norm in its way and pushing the boundaries of traditional 'brush-and-canvas-centred art history'²⁶, there is a clear display of political commentary and the first contemporary uses of the label 'political art'.

In the mid-seventies, when Thatcher began to lead the Conservative Party through to the end of her reign as Prime Minister in 1990²⁷, Thatcher was considered a radical leader in her way of thinking. Thatcher's policies on economics and favouring a free market²⁸ were the theme of societal issues artists were challenging then and now, well into the modern day. As much of the art in this period shifted to the left, politics shifted to the right at the hand of Thatcher's liberalism, and so the narrative of all art being political was raised during the decades that spanned her leadership and beyond. Political policies advocated for the self-preservation of the individual, with the leader of the country claiming, 'there is no such thing as society'²⁹. This publicly endorsed selfishness as the basis of daily life³⁰ allowed the affluent to grow richer, and the battle to survive worsen for the unemployed, allowing traditional art forms such as painting to become popular again³¹. The economic crises led artists to reconnect with society through their networks. It was not until the Labour Party's victory over the Tories in 1997³², that Britain's political and cultural ethos shifted once more and a newfound interest in the radical art of the seventies arose. As artists stepped forward with new socio-political intentions at the turn of the millennium, a new artistic generation emerged, rife with activists³³.

Artists have the freedom to use their voice or artwork to make statements, whether political or not, through their platforms. I believe artists should use their platforms to communicate with society. Walker discusses theorists of the seventies arguing that 'political art' was not simply a subcategory of art or the latest art movement, claiming this label misleading as 'all art is (already) political'³⁴. This broad statement is contemporary, I believe; and is reinforced by Walker, asserting that all art is ideological or has political implications. Others, such as Nate Mancini, a Christian activist, argue profusely that art is not and should

²⁶ Baumgardner, 'The Most Iconic Artists of the 1970's'

²⁷ Birgit, Bujard., *The British Prime Minister in the Core Executive: Political Leadership in British European Policy*, p.4

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.5

²⁹ Thatcher, *Women's Own* interview with Douglas Keay.

³⁰ Breakwell, 'Artist's thoughts on the seventies in words and pictures', p.11

³¹ Forgeard, 'Behind the artistic boom: What contributed to the Resurgence of the Arts in the 1980s'.

³² Bennister, *Prime Ministers in Power Political Leadership in Britain and Australia*, p.65

³³ Walker, *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain*, p.258.

³⁴ *Ibid.*,

not be political and claim this notion to be absurd³⁵. The discourse on the classification and power of political art is heavily debated by theorists, critics, curators, and art historians, with many opposing views and no definitive yes or no answer. Boris Groys, a globally distinguished art critic and philosopher of post-socialist belief³⁶, writes:

there are nothing but differences as far as the eye can see. So, one must make a choice, take sides, be committed – and accept the inevitability of being accused of one-sidedness, of merely advertising for one’s favourite artists at the expense of others to advance their commercial success on the art market³⁷

in his book *Art Power* as he probes the balance of power within modern art and politics through a series of essays. Using this source is vital in bringing the technicalities of the art market into view when defining a stance on the question, as one argument for political art is that market forces play a huge part in defining whether art is thriving. Mark Vallen, an American activist for Art for a Change, comments in his essay *Why All Art is Political*, ‘Since labour and commerce are realms understood to be political spheres, then art, which is inextricably bound to those fields, is automatically part of a political process’³⁸. This interpretation of political art is simple and important to include. It assumes that all art is political because politics controls commerce and labour, an undeniable part of artistic production. Yet many argue that art is (or should be) a purely aesthetic commodity, and artists should not undermine the trust of the viewer by providing them with anything other than beautiful art, existing to deal with themes of humanity and feelings, not politics³⁹. This final opinion reminds me of Fuller’s later beliefs in a way – the belief that art should be aesthetic and the need to protect the traditional fine art forms known as The Arts.

This argument on whether all art is political will continue to go back and forth for as long as anyone can debate the topic; there is no apparent one-size-fits-all answer. Is it as simple an explanation as public perception that can label an artwork as political? It is my opinion that art is open to interpretation and the viewers experiences will allow them to absorb art in the context of their lives and opinions. Art is ultimately subjective. To explore this opinion, I have selected two artworks varied in political stance to compare and evaluate the messaging behind each piece - these artworks will feature in the third part of this ECR on display within my exhibition.

³⁵ Mancini, ‘No, All Art is Not Political’

³⁶ Post socialism beliefs focus on the lasting social and cultural effects of socialism and how socialism influences neoliberalism and the free market.

³⁷ Groys, *Art Power*, p.1

³⁸ Vallen, ‘Why All Art is Political’

³⁹ Mancini, ‘No, All Art is Not Political’

Artwork 1 – Eddie Chambers *Destruction of the National Front* (1979-80)



Figure 1 – Eddie Chambers, *Destruction of the National Front*, 1980. Four screenprints on paper and card. Tate Modern Collections.

The first artwork selected is by British artist, curator, and art history professor, Eddie Chambers. Chambers was one of the founding members of BLK Art Group⁴⁰, a groundbreaking group of British black artists and students in the 80s⁴¹. In 1978, Thatcher rose in the polls by 11%⁴² following an interview with *World in Action* in which she said:

people are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture and, you know, the British character has done so much for democracy, for law and done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped, people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in. So, if you want good race relations, you have got the allay peoples' fears on numbers⁴³

This blatant racism from the Prime Minister undeniably encouraged a growth in the already deep-rooted racism throughout the United Kingdom. It reinforced the messaging behind the National Front – a far-right extreme fascist political party – that disbanded in 1979. Chambers recalls in an email to Tate curator Julia Carmen:

⁴⁰ According to Tate Modern, an association of young black artists known as The BLK art group questioned what black art was, formed its identity and questioned its future.

⁴¹ Nairne, *Black Arts in the Maelstrom*, p.25-30

⁴² Carmen, 'Destruction of the National Front'

⁴³ Thatcher, *World in Action* interview with Gordon Burns.

the National Front had a very strong presence...with stickers declaring 'If They're Black, Send Them Back!'...with such casual, but insistent and explicit 'in your face' racism...it was in this context my piece was conceived⁴⁴.

Destruction of the National Front [Fig. 1] is Chambers' artistic response to the nationalist, racist ideologies of the country at the time, and Chambers uses the National Front's appropriation of the Union Jack to make a political statement. Using his chosen artistic medium, collage, the art piece shows four images that feature an unmistakable torn-up Union Jack, rearranged into a swastika⁴⁵. Each image from left to right is further ripped until the final image on the right is unrecognisable as neither the swastika nor the British flag. The use of collage in the piece is disruptive and leans into the intended messaging of Chambers' work. This piece could be seen as a continuation of the disruption the Black and Asian communities had been trying to cause through years of protests, marches, and sit-downs. The systemic racism, public violence and anti-immigrant policing that was encouraged by the government created such unliveable conditions that these citizens were crying out for change⁴⁶. *Destruction of the National Front* is a powerful response to a critical issue in British politics in the late 70s, perfectly timed and executed clearly. Context is crucial to the understanding of Chambers' intent behind the piece; however, when stood alone, the artwork takes a stand against some element of the British culture. I was unaware of the National Front before researching this topic; so, I understand the piece better, given the context. There is no denying who Chambers is addressing, and the issues of poor black representation he targets within the country. This artwork positions well amongst the other pieces selected for my exhibition because of its strong references to a dark side of British culture.

⁴⁴ Carmen, 'Destruction of the National Front'

⁴⁵ The swastika is used in many cultures for centuries however, the most famous use was by Hitler during the world war as a sign for the Nazis.

⁴⁶ Carmen, 'Destruction of the National Front'

Artwork 2 – Ken Currie *Unknown Man* (2019)



Figure 2 – Ken Currie, *Unknown Man*, 2019. Oil on canvas. Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

Ken Currie, one of Scotland's most renowned painters, was a student at Glasgow School of Art, and his painting *Unknown Man* is the second piece chosen to support this writing. Currie made a name for himself as an artist within the so-called New Glasgow Boys⁴⁷, painting unsettling images of the human form, often suffering from injury, illness, or ageing. *Unknown Man* [Fig. 2] is not overtly political on initial viewing. The artwork features Dame Sue Black, a Scottish forensic anthropologist, standing in surgical robes behind a table that holds the covered remains of a body. This large-scale work is intense, confrontational, and sobering, highlighting the importance of her work. My initial response to this was sadness, reminding me of Covid-19, a time when death and the struggles of the NHS were daily news. An artwork like this responding to Covid would not have surprised me, however, this piece is an ode to the career of Prof. Black. Where the piece is clearly about death, it is also 'transformed into a welcome statement about power for good, knowledge as key, medicine's possibility to resolve problems, and – in the right hands, a consoling ability to reveal lost identity'⁴⁸ as described by a writer for *Artlyst*⁴⁹. Black's work was revolutionary in her field, deployed to warzones across the world to identify the bodies of victims in countries

⁴⁷ The Essential School of Painting describe the New Glasgow Boys as a bold group of influential young painters in the '80s, who produced a heroic amount of work on the subject matter of Scotland's working class, reviving figurative painting internationally.

⁴⁸ Henry, 'Ken Currie: *Unknown Man* Scottish National Portrait Gallery'

⁴⁹ Artlyst is an arts information website, based in London, that reports accurately on international contemporary arts news.

such as Sierra Leone, Iraq, and Kosovo⁵⁰. I believe this piece is emotionally powerful, and although it is not a direct response to Britain's political landscape, Black's career is steeped in the consequences of political actions on war. *Unknown Man* is a shocking piece and sits well within my exhibition, encouraging the viewer to question what is happening within the art and the horror it refers to.

On the question of all art being political, these two vary in their political expression; both have political connotations. Chambers' work comes from personal experience, reacting to widespread racism across Britain that the leader of the country shamefully endorsed. In contrast, Currie's work is an ode to the lifetime of dedication given by Black to give identity to those souls lost at war, wars created by politics. Both feature classic and tactile ways of making - nodding to the artists emotions as they prepare each piece. They are both intensely emotive pieces, giving the viewer much to contemplate.

As outlined, this ECR focuses on contemporary art⁵¹ and whilst this covers the period from Thatcher and beyond, Chambers' piece is the oldest artwork (1979) to feature in my exhibition in Part Three. There was much great art to come from the '80s and '90s; however, for the context of this ECR, the artists chosen to feature in the remainder of my writing were developing their craft throughout these years, some rising to fame for their activism. Another reason for this gap in the timeline is simple; since the turn of the millennium in 2000, the standard of politics in Britain has declined drastically, particularly after the Brexit campaign⁵², giving artists so much more to respond to. Combined with advances in technology allowing new techniques of creating⁵³, the growth of art production and the sharing of British visual culture through the internet, the modern art world has much to choose from. Part Two outlines why these remaining pieces have been chosen from this modern timeline.

⁵⁰ The Royal Scottish Academy, 'Sue Black HRSA'

⁵¹ Contemporary art refers to art produced by artists alive today.

⁵² Gamble, 'Britain's Eternal Decline'

⁵³ Anon, 'The Impact of Technology on Art'

Part Two

Artistic Forms of Political Expression

Art reflects the society we live in, illustrating the lives we live, whether art is directly political or not. Art reflects the positive sentiments of life in that cultural moment or highlights a society's sorrowful trials and tribulations, sparking conversation. In the modern day, artists increasingly comment on or respond to politics. I believe art is always an interpretation of the social climate in which the artist, and society live, regardless of their political stance. The *ArtBuzz*⁵⁴ definition of Political Art is clear and concise, arguing that

though it's very difficult to define political art...one general acceptable definition that all agree with is that art can be said to be political if it portrays all the direct and indirect influences of politics on society⁵⁵

before continuing to explore the functions of political art. This source is clear to read, allowing for a thorough understanding of what the writer believes to be the four forms of political art: socio-political expression, protest, satire, and propaganda. This short explanation states simple facts, giving an excellent base to start my research. This source gave me a solid structure for selection of the following political artworks and has been a fundamental part of my research. Further reading on the following artworks is supported by newspapers that give instant updates and opinions in Britain as events take place, and the artists own writings, interviews, and press releases. To understand how modern artists respond to political experiences, I have explored these four forms of political art and aligned them with 6 artworks that fit the function, including them in my exhibition.

⁵⁴ *Artbuzz*, 'Political Art'

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

i. Propaganda

Artwork 3 – Darren Cullen *Neoliberalism Isn't Working* (2019)

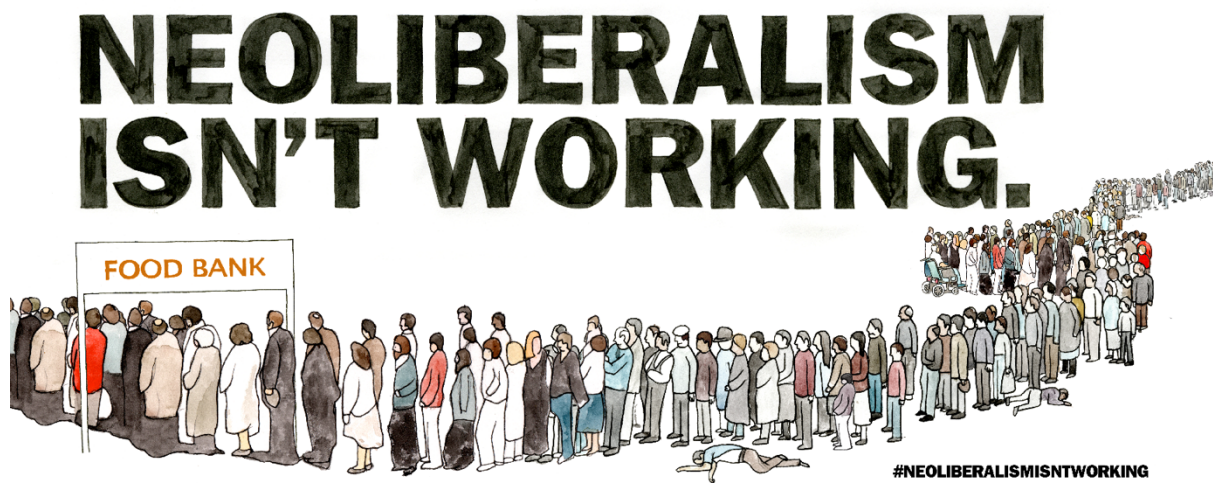


Figure 3 – Darren Cullen, Anti-Tory Propaganda: *Neoliberalism Isn't Working*, 2019. Illustration printed on poster paper. Spelling Mistakes Cost Lives Archive (Artists Own Website)

Propaganda is an art form that has been successful during times of political unrest, particularly war⁵⁶, and features artwork that communicates an agenda for the Government to the mass public. Often presenting simple graphics, bold lettering, and a personal element such as a face or a person, propaganda is certainly not considered 'fine art'⁵⁷. It aims to carry a simple, clear, and emotive message. Propaganda is advertising— attempting to influence human behaviour and form a sense of conformity through its messaging, holding power over the consumer. Whether that is a consumer of a product or a government policy. Some of the most successful uses of propaganda in history include the artworks produced by the Soviet Union in the Cold War or Hitler during World War II; however, there have been many modern-day responses to the British Conservatism through propaganda. As mentioned, Thatcher rose to power in the '70s with her new neoliberal⁵⁸ way of governing, and one factor supporting her successful election was anti-Labour propaganda of the time. An example that remains one of the most iconic political campaign posters in existence is from 1979: it shows a queue of people snaking across the page from an unemployment office, with the words 'Labour isn't Working. Britain's better off with the Conservatives'⁵⁹. The poster was not initially publicised due to a lack of budget, however, at a time when political advertising was not well-received, the Labour government officials who were outraged and

⁵⁶ Lasswell, 'The Theory of Political Propaganda', p.627-31

⁵⁷ Fine art is created primarily for their creative intellectual, aesthetic, or imaginative properties.

⁵⁸ Neoliberalism refers to the late 20th Century resurgence of the 19th century political theories favouring the free market.

⁵⁹ Anon, 'History of Advertising No 90: 'Labour isn't working' poster'.

made public comment wound up making it into a news story that ultimately put it on the front page⁶⁰.

Artists have recycled many modern-day iterations of historical propaganda in a bid to make a political statement; in *Enough*, I have chosen to include a piece by British-Irish artist Darren Cullen⁶¹. Cullen is an illustrator and activist with a vast portfolio of work that features his signature illustrative style and attack on consumerism. The named work, *Neoliberalism Isn't Working* [Fig. 3] featured on overhead advertising boards in trams and tubes in 2019. This new iteration plays on the writing and imagery from the 1979 version; however, the queue is longer, the people more varied, there are children, elderly and disabled, with others passed out on the floor as they wait for entry to a food bank. I find his work highly engaging due to its witty stance on public and current political affairs. Cullen's key motivation is fascinating to me; he dropped out of studying advertising in Leeds as he found it to be the wrong medium for him, struggling to come to terms with the unethical associations of advertising, claiming it was:

manipulating the desires and aspirations of the public, and especially children, using an arsenal of sophisticated and emotionally damaging psychological techniques is an appalling way to make and living and an even worse way to sustain an economy⁶².

To me, this change makes a statement, allowing me to believe that he wholeheartedly has confidence in the messages he portrays. His work feels and looks like classic propaganda with a satirical twist, inspired by his advertising experience. This response is, sadly, a believable image. During the Covid-19 pandemic that started in 2019, we saw a downward spiral of economics and rise in government cutbacks⁶³ at the hands of the conservatives and their neo-liberal roots laid by Thatcher. The use of food banks has risen astronomically since 2018, with almost 3 million British citizens needing access to one in comparison to just 1.3 million in 2018⁶⁴. This artistic response from Cullen is a direct commentary on a serious issue in Britain. This 'anti-Tory propaganda' will strike a chord with many in society today, bringing the first graphic element to my exhibition in Part Three.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Cullen, artists own website.

⁶² Ibid., 'About' page.

⁶³ UNISON, 'Shocking picture of austerity cuts to local services is revealed by UNISON'.

⁶⁴ Trussell Trust, 'End of Year Stats: Food Bank Statistics for Previous Financial Years with Regional Breakdown' (graph)

ii. Socio-Political Expression

Artwork 4 – Jenny Saville *Aleppo* (2018)



Figure 4 – Jenny Saville, *Aleppo*, 2018. Pastel and charcoal on canvas. National Galleries Scotland Archive.

Socio-political expression exists to inform society of political or social issues that they may not be altogether aware of due to differences in their religion, beliefs, or social class⁶⁵. Social commentary from an artist encourages the viewer to contemplate an issue, way of life or problem they have never come across in their place in society, and for this reason, it carries immense shock value. Artists are naturally creative and find ways to express themselves that the 'common citizen' may not understand. Not all art that makes a statement can enact a change when stood alone, and so the role of the curator plays a massive part in giving art a collective voice; I will explore this further in Part Three.

Jenny Saville's 2018 artwork, *Aleppo*⁶⁶ [Fig. 4], is a powerful example of an artistic response to a socio-political issue. Saville's artwork draws from her experience and lifelong career painting the female body in its raw and natural form, often large scale and either monochromatic or multi-tonal, with layers of oil paint on canvas⁶⁷. Taking inspiration from previous research in which Saville saw hundreds of images of babies carried from bombsites

⁶⁵ Cambridge Dictionary, 'socio-political, adj.'

⁶⁶ National Galleries Scotland, 'Jenny Saville, *Aleppo*'

⁶⁷ Miller, 'Jenny Saville unveils harrowing image of war in Syria in first ever Scottish show of her painting'

and warzones, this work is vivid and emotional. Aleppo evokes an instant response of sadness from the viewer. In an interview with the Herald, Saville explained:

I have done paintings linked to war before, but not linked to a political situation – I have endless images from the internet, or from newspapers, of babies that have been killed in these bombings, and when I finished the piece, I have two children myself, how long will it be before we as humans know not to do this? It's not a political piece, but it is linked to what is going on in that region⁶⁸.

Aleppo is a technically brilliant response to the situation in Syria in which Britain was heavily involved⁶⁹. For the first time in her career, Saville openly reacted to a political situation⁷⁰, using her platform to preach the impact of our Government's wrongful actions on a faraway country. When looking at other artworks by Saville, they are honest, imperfect, and full of sadness – always displaying the eyes of the subject writhing across the canvas in a way that you can see into their souls. There is much the same feeling in this piece, although it is powerful to consider the lack of a face belonging to the figure carrying the bodies in their arms, presumably away from a bombsite. On closer look, it is almost as if the body carrying the children does not exist – the dark colours are layered, and the texture is almost ethereal. The energy in this piece has shifted, especially around the bold use of red pastel across the bodies of small children. In Part Three, this intensely political piece significantly impacts the viewers, bringing a strong layer of sadness to *Enough*.

⁶⁸ Quoted by Miller, 'Jenny Saville unveils harrowing image of war in Syria in first ever Scottish show of her painting'

⁶⁹ BBC News reported that British airstrikes on Syria & Iraq in 2014 killed 4,000 enemies, reducing the Islamic state to rubble. Civilian casualties were assumed to be under-reported as only 1 was recorded.

⁷⁰ Miller, 'Jenny Saville unveils harrowing image of war in Syria in first ever Scottish show of her painting'

iii. Protest

Artwork 5 – Banksy *Vote to Love* (2016)



Figure 5 – Banksy, *Vote to Love*, 2016. Spray paint on UKIP placard mounted on board. Sotheby's Private Collection.

Protest is an essential societal output as it publicly communicates a disagreement. In the political landscape, protest is not uncommon; the two naturally go hand in hand. Suppose society disagrees with a government or a policy change to our human rights, peaceful protest is allowed, bringing the underrepresented public views into the limelight to enact a change. Historically, protests have been very successful with critical events in contemporary Britain, such as the 1990 Poll Tax Riots⁷¹ that eventually saw the resignation of Thatcher and the 2003 London March⁷² against the Iraq War in which the country saw their confidence in Tony Blair as Prime Minister diminish⁷³. To this day, protest remains a key part of British culture and, in recent times, has come under attack from the Government as it attempts to amend the laws around protest. Rishi Sunak recently said, 'We cannot have protests conducted by a small minority disrupting the lives of the ordinary public. It's not acceptable and we're going to bring it to an end'⁷⁴. Protest is an active and emotional art form, often angry and unapologetic. Political art has a way of becoming the activism it seeks, responding to political and social issues in many ways. The very nature of protest is creative: exploring new ways to communicate an idea to be heard by the masses.

⁷¹ The National Archives, 'Revolt: The Story of England's First Protest' podcast recording, 00:00-04:22

⁷² Adams, 'A beautiful outpouring of rage: did Britain's biggest ever protest change the world?'

⁷³ Anon, '9 Famous Moments in British Protest History'

⁷⁴ Government website, 'PM takes action to stop disruptive protests'

The art of protest has become synonymous with the ethos of street art or graffiti. The act of taking to the streets to convey a provocative message in a rebellious, unrestricted, and albeit illegal, popular in contemporary art worldwide. Graffiti is infamous for location tagging and acts as a sign of placemaking, raises the notion of anti-establishment, promotes counterculture and defines a cultural identity on the streets. The Maddox gallery sums up street art with a term they have coined, 'The Banksy Effect':

Street art disrupts the world we inhabit and imposes itself into our lives and spaces in order to challenge or comment on the status quo. Banksy's art continues to challenge our views, perceptions, and beliefs and has managed to revolutionize the way that artists showcase their ideas⁷⁵.

Graffiti has always been considered vandalism⁷⁶, not art. I believe it is art - it serves as a form of protest art, making it vital to include as a form of political expression. I have included one of the most iconic British street artists, Banksy, in this writing.

Arguably a household name, Banksy's infamous artworks across the globe are instantly recognisable and always toe the line; mainstream versus alternative, legal versus illegal and art versus vandalism. Banksy's work is heavily satirical and leans into the darker side of British humour through his iconic stencilling technique in choice locations. His work is always relevant to current events and challenges social injustice in the locations where he is creating art. When a Banksy artwork appears, it activates the local area, bringing crowds and publicity, usually before being taken down if it is overly political⁷⁷. For my exhibition *Enough*, I have included Banksy's 2016 artwork *Vote to Love* [Fig. 5]. In the book to support his 2023 exhibition *Cut and Run* at Glasgow's MoMa⁷⁸, Banksy recalls collecting UKIP *Vote to Leave* placards during the Brexit referendum and learning he could strategically place a love heart to read 'Vote to Love'. Banksy initially remarks that this seemed an uncontroversial move, but I believe this action became protest. This work declares the artist's views against the politics of the moment in a timely way. Using political paraphernalia found in the street to create this statement is genius. Despite the intention behind the piece being harmless, it became controversial when the MP who had commissioned the placards sent a lawyer's letter to Banksy 'seeking damages for mutilating its meaning'⁷⁹. The piece also caused controversy in the art world – Banksy submitted the work to Grayson Perry's 250th Summer Exhibition for the Royal Academy of Art under a pseudonym, aligning with his

⁷⁵ Maddox Gallery, London, 'The Banksy Effect'

⁷⁶ Choi, 'Street Art Activism: What White People Call Vandalism'

⁷⁷ Bracknell News reported a confirmed Banksy work removed within an hour of its appearance in December last year, it featured military drones painted on stop signs on the roads.

⁷⁸ Anon, 'Banksy Opens New Exhibition 'Cut and Run' at Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow'

⁷⁹ Banksy, *Cut and Run – 25 years card labour*, p.92

ethos to remain anonymous, and the judges rejected it. It made an appearance in the show, however, as Banksy was approached later by Perry as a distinguished artist to submit a piece⁸⁰. This situation inadvertently highlighted the public discourse at the time that saw many artists questioning the role of the establishment within the art world⁸¹ and their support of the avant-garde. Resubmitting the piece was Banksy's statement against this. This piece sits well within *Enough* as a prime example of how artwork can carry a mutual public message of protest against a political agenda, which I explore further in Part Three.

Artwork 6 – kennardphillips *Blue Murder* (2013)



Figure 6 – kennardphillips, *Blue Murder*, 2013. 24 pigment ink and charcoal on newspaper prints. kennardphillips Website.

When considering protest art, I have selected a second piece of art, this time by kennardphillips, the artistic collaborative duo of Peter Kennard and Cat Phillips. Kennard and Phillips came together during the Iraq invasion in 2002 to create protest art⁸². Since then, their collaborations have evolved and attack the powers leading invasions around the world, creating work that is a tool for the social and political movements challenging government systems. They describe themselves as 'the visual arm of protest'⁸³, their work is created in the hope that it will be used as activism by those movements who need it. kennardphillips publicly support the cause against political agendas and condemn those in charge by

⁸⁰ Anon, 'Did Banksy get into the Summer Exhibition?'

⁸¹ Botton, 'The Problem with the Art Establishment'

⁸² kennardphillips Website, 'About' Page

⁸³ Ibid.

creating street art, photomontages, large-scale work, and commissioned exhibitions highlighting the wrongs committed. *Blue Murder*⁸⁴ was an exhibition held in 2013 that featured an assault on David Cameron's destruction of the welfare system within Britain. The exhibition featured many images of Cameron's face [Fig. 6] printed on to the *Financial Times*, violently ripped open at the centre to show various images of 'destruction caused by the Conservatives attack on the welfare system, the National Health Service, the disabled, the unemployed and the poor'⁸⁵. The artwork is a direct response to the decline of British society at the hands of the Conservative Party ideologies. The Conservative party colour is blue, hence the exhibitions name. Initially displayed in box frames as if relics from a museum of history, the artwork is made from ink and charcoal on newspaper, referred to in the press release as 'deprived materials'⁸⁶. The result is rough and ready, almost dirty, and this leans into the idea of the dirty streets of Britain and the dirty press. The use of the *Financial Times* is a nod to the newspaper that broke the infamous Greensill lobbying scandal in which Cameron reportedly made £10million⁸⁷. I think there is beauty in each piece as you view each rip and tear in Cameron's face, exposing the raw horrors below that are all too real for the most deprived in the country. It is emotive and triggers a response, regardless of political stature. This piece fits perfectly within my exhibition, *Enough*, as a tool to evoke anger within the viewer.

⁸⁴ Anon, 'Blue Murder: kennardphillips opening exhibition'.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Swinford, 'David Cameron 'told friends he would make \$60m from Greensill deal''.

iv. Satire

Artwork 7 – Cold War Steve *untitled* (2022)



Figure 7 – Cold War Steve, *Untitled*, 2022. Digital photo montage image. Artists own website.

I believe Satire is the most well-known form of political expression today. Artists use satire to bring about an awareness of a political issue or situation using humour. Satire is a category of witty art important to British visual culture and a society that regularly consumes artistic, political commentary. Satire often presents itself in political cartoons and comics, whether these contemporary cartoonists take heed from existing graphical styles or channel their own through the story they tell. Despite being centuries old as an art form⁸⁸, political cartoons are more prevalent in contemporary art than ever before. Social media and the advances of modern-day internet have changed the shape of art in many ways⁸⁹, the most important change is that artists do not require an esteemed art establishment to credit or validate their work as digital sharing platforms grow in popularity. Artists can respond as quickly as an incident affects them and shedding a comical light on these rises in popularity a lot quicker online. Through the developments in social sharing and resharing in British visual culture, a new wave of artists has arisen, known for comic images made of photomontage and digital collage⁹⁰. This new art form is the 21st century cartoon, and although a fine art stance would question if it is art, its popularity grows. One of these modern artists who features in *Enough* is Cold War Steve.

⁸⁸ Taylor, *The Literariness of Graphic Satire*, p.3-39

⁸⁹ Pigment, The Last., 'How Social Media Changed Art'

⁹⁰ MadButt Studio, 'Digital Collage Trends'

Cold War Steve, or Christopher Spencer, is an artist from Birmingham specialising in satirical and surreal photomontages. Spencer's humorous work, made on an iPad, rose to fame in 2016 through his Twitter feed as it 'offered a lifeline to many during dark times'⁹¹. His 2022 artwork featured in *Enough* depicts the infamous British Prime Minister, Liz Truss [Fig. 7], sitting in an outdated, '80s style salon, showing the stylist a photo of Thatcher as if to say, 'I want my hair to look like this'. The work is a classic Cold War Steve photomontage featuring Steve McFadden, the English actor famous for his long-term role in *Eastenders*. In an interview with ITV News in 2020, Spencer discusses how he developed his name from an idea to feature McFadden in a Cold War scene:

in no way am I using him in the same way I would use Trump or Mogg or anyone, you know, he's there as the 'every-man', that's what I say. He is in the piece usually with his existential angst, observing and dismayed⁹².

Spencer's work stemmed from this simple idea and McFadden now features in every work. As he talks further within the ITV interview, he explains his background as an 'ardent Remainer' and how his work since the Brexit decision became a way to channel his anxieties, anger and concerns and gradually became more political. I wonder if the inclusion of the common person (McFadden) is Spencer's avatar, communicating his feelings of angst, inserting a piece of himself in an almost whimsical self-portrait within the montage?

As for the content within this image, it is no surprise that Truss would feature – Truss was one of the most notable Prime Ministers of the 21st century, thus making her the perfect candidate for satirical political commentary. Truss was elected in September 2022 following the resignation of Boris Johnson⁹³ and her first act was to release a mini-budget. The budget was widely criticised for the financial instability it would create and was reversed⁹⁴ before further scandals within the Government came to light, particularly allegations of intimidation and manhandling⁹⁵. Truss resigned in October, making her the shortest-serving Prime Minister in history after just 44 days in office⁹⁶. Naturally, Truss became the laughingstock of the country in that moment, with much of society mocking her online. The *Daily Star* live-streamed a head of lettuce, comparing the expected shortness of her premiership to that of the lettuce's shelf life⁹⁷, and of course, the lettuce outlived Truss' reign.

⁹¹ Cold War Steve, artists own website 'About' Page

⁹² Spencer on ITV News, 'Cold War Steve on his satirical montages of UK Politics'

⁹³ BBC News, 'Boris Johnson's farewell speech as UK Prime Minister'

⁹⁴ Keep, *The October 17th Fiscal Budget: Summary and Background*

⁹⁵ BBC News Article, 'MPs allege bullying during chaotic fracking vote'

⁹⁶ Stephens & Capurro, 'Liz Truss becomes Britain's shortest-serving Prime Minister'

⁹⁷ *Daily Star*, 'The Moment Lizzy Lettuce outlasted Liz Truss as Prime Minister'

However, Cold War Steve released this artwork at the start of Truss's premiership, tackling a very different narrative. Throughout her time as Foreign Secretary, Truss was compared to Thatcher and, on multiple occasions, addressed the comparison herself⁹⁸. Truss admired Thatcher and, although she had a different set of political challenges and obstacles to overcome some 40 years later, her approach to resolving these issues bore uncanny resemblances to Thatcher's ideologies. Truss earned herself the status of an 'ideological shapeshifter'⁹⁹, advocating for individualism and was suspicious of a welfare state, much like Thatcher. This artwork by Spencer tackles this narrative head-on, depicting Truss attempting to make herself more like Thatcher in the salon. The artwork was on trend and continued to poke fun at Truss like much of the country as they watched her attempt to resolve political issues with non-radical and outdated Thatcherite solutions. This piece sits well within the exhibition context in Part Three and introduces a very modern art form, highlighting a rather comic period of British politics.

Artwork 8 – kennardphillips *Photo Op* (2005)



Figure 8 – kennardphillips, *Photo Op*, 2005. Photo-lithographic print on 60gsm paper. Artists own website.

Political art can encompass more than one form of expression to convey its message; the work of kennardphillips is the perfect example. As mentioned, kennardphillips pride themselves on their artwork as protest to campaign against war; however, their work *Photo Op* [Fig. 8] encompasses a satirical nature. Although satire is often comical, in this instance, it evokes an emotional response of anger. The power of the image in art is vitally important to context and the intended messaging portrayed. *Photo Op* has become a definitive work of art in the commentary on the Iraq War. This photomontage features the infamous Tony Blair smile as he poses for a selfie in front of a desert of burning oil and is a

⁹⁸ McGrath, 'Liz Truss rejects Margaret Thatcher comparisons: I am my own person'

⁹⁹ Drury, 'How similar is Liz Truss to Margaret Thatcher?'

direct response to the unlawful invasion of Iraq in 2003¹⁰⁰. Sara Bevan, curator of Imperial War Museum North said:

One of the things that contemporary art does really well in relation to conflict is talk about issues that are less tangible or more philosophical. There is much more of a personal or political voice coming through, with artists like kennardphillips and their Tony Blair piece¹⁰¹.

The work was projected onto buildings near the Iraq inquiry in 2011, taking up an active role of protest such is kennardphillips' M.O. I find the piece to be initially familiar as the face of Blair smiling was iconic during his reign as Prime Minister of Britain between 1997 and 2007. Blair was the longest-serving Labour Prime Minister in modern politics and branded himself as 'New Labour'¹⁰². The main feeling from this piece is anger – when you see this national leader, posing shamelessly in front of the destruction his hand caused, the emotion is raw. It is a successful political artwork and is perfect amongst the other pieces selected for *Enough*.

The Government controls the lives of the citizens within the country, and its decisions impact everyone directly, whether you agree with them or not. Politics raises emotions for all of society, no matter which party you support, and with all forms of political art, there is a clear emotional response to be had. Bringing together these selected pieces that vary in medium, time of release, target audience and the size of the artist's platform evokes a wide range of emotions. The most prominent in this selection is the feeling of anger, which clearly indicates my opinion of politics within the country. In my exhibition, *Enough*, the aim is to activate the viewers on the topic and encourage them to question their political stance.

¹⁰⁰ MacAskill et al, 'Iraq War was illegal and breached UN charter, say Annan'

¹⁰¹ Durrant, Cover Story, *The Times* Issue 70990 p8

¹⁰² New Labour refers to the period of British politics from 1997 to 2010 where Tony Blair and Gordon Brown adopted a newly reformed Labour Party in which the ideologies of the party shifted from socialist policies to those that favoured equality of opportunity, social justice and favoured the market for economic efficiency.

Part Three

The Role of the Curator

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines curate or curation as 'to select, organise, and look after the objects or works of art in a museum or art gallery'¹⁰³. This is an outdated description of the term as it directly refers to gallery or museum-based work, curatorial practices have expanded beyond this in the modern day and are no longer limited to selecting, organising, and preserving artefacts in this setting. David Balzer refers to this as 'the popular understanding of curatin' and coined the term *curationism* in his publication, *How Curationism Took Over the Art World - And Everything Else*¹⁰⁴, highlighting our fascination with the 'curationist moment' we have lived in since the mid-90s.

It is unknown when, where, or why the earliest exhibition of art occurred, what it contained, or if a term equivalent to 'curation' existed then. The crucial element of that exhibition is that it took place, and the curator believed in the story told by the content. Something at that moment needed to be expressed, communicated, or liberated from the curator's mind by bringing multiple artistic voices together and giving them a new meaning through their contextual connections. Carolee Thea¹⁰⁵, an artist, curator, writer, and art critic known globally for her in-depth knowledge of contemporary art, art history and global culture, is a source of great value within the world of curating and to this writing. Thea's international book series, *On Curating*¹⁰⁶ features interviews with artists and curators she considers pioneers of global 'curationism' and as 'curators whose interests lies in testing the exhibition's conventional boundaries'¹⁰⁷. Thea characterises independent curators as:

translators, movers, or creators whose material is the work of others...the role of mediator is inescapable...while the art critic embodies the generalised gaze of the public, the curator inversely translates the artist's work by providing context to enable the public's understanding¹⁰⁸.

This quote encompasses the entire sense of curating. Curating is about giving context to the artist's work and communicating this to the public. Art is subjective to the viewer based on their experiences. However, in a curated selection, art forms take on a whole new meaning, defined by the curator and reinforced by its place in society at that time. This is why I have

¹⁰³ *Oxford English Dictionary*, 'Curation, n.'

¹⁰⁴ Balzer, *Curationism: How Curating Took Over the Art World and Everything Else*, p.2

¹⁰⁵ Thea's website, 'Biographical Narrative'

¹⁰⁶ Thea, *On Curating: Interviews with Ten International Curators*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p.9

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p.6

chosen an extended curatorial rationale to discuss the topic of artistic responses to the British politics. By aligning my selection of artistic responses into a new narrative, I bring together multiple voices of artists who use their craft to challenge real-life matters. My exhibition, *Enough*, evokes emotion within the viewer, challenging their understanding of the quality of politics in Britain. The following two chapters feature an explanation of the intended audience of the exhibition and the layout of *Enough*, analysing how the exhibition's layout strengthens the messaging behind the artistic responses.

Enough: Location & Audience

When considering the audience for *Enough*, it is essential to consider the reach of politics within the country – politics feels like it is everywhere, but did it always feel like this? On a personal level, I can recount a few times that I felt politics was all there was to be talked about: in the lead-up to the Scottish Referendum in 2014 and throughout the Covid 19 Pandemic that started in January 2020. These two periods of political interest are vivid in my mind. The most recent pandemic was naturally a pivotal time for politics, with the moves of the Government televised daily as the country feared for their lives¹⁰⁹. Politics became a daily event with regular briefings to the country, keeping everyone up to date. When you include the spread of information over social media in today's culture, negative news travels faster than ever before¹¹⁰ and it was the handling of the pandemic by the conservatives that brought the British Government's flaws to the forefront of popular culture. Politics permeates our lives daily across TV screens, mobiles, radios, and newspapers; my target audience for this curatorial rationale is those who consume political news across these platforms daily. Those who can vote in General Elections are the ones who can make a change for the future of Britain and are fundamental to target to enact a change.

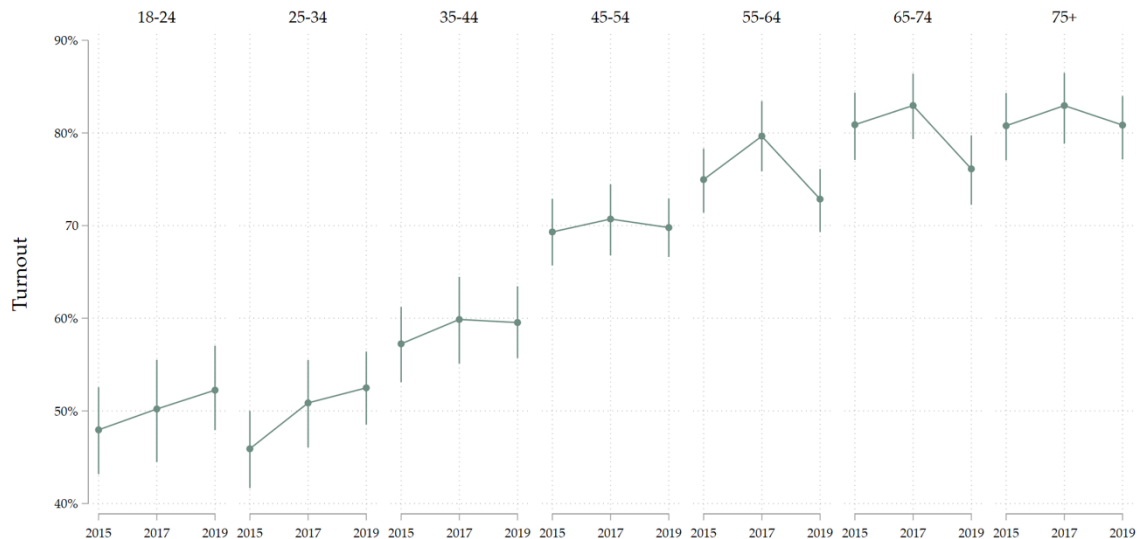


Figure 9 – *British Election Study, 2021*. A hierarchical Bayesian-style table examined the turnout reported by age at the 2015, 2017 and 2019 elections. *British Election Study Website*.

In order to establish a target audience, looking at previous voting figures to understand where there was a gap in voting is crucial to the success of my exhibition. As we

¹⁰⁹ Mach, et al. 'News media coverage of COVID-19 public health and policy information'

¹¹⁰ Kurzgesagt – In a Nutshell., 'The Internet is Worse Than Ever – Now What?'

can see from the *British Election Study* [Fig. 9], there is a vast difference in voting turnout per age group at past general elections¹¹¹. Ages 45+ have a great turnout at over 70% of the population, whereas ages 18-34 have only recently surpassed 50% turnout. Although their turnout is trending slightly upwards, the younger generations appear less likely to vote than older generations. It is clear that the younger generations lack the turnout to make a change with their vote, making them a key demographic to target with my exhibition. There was a visible downturn in turnout for the older generations in the 2019 election, I assume this was due to bad weather during an unusual winter election. This election was the first in December since 1918¹¹², and was called by Parliament due several failed attempts at a Brexit withdrawal agreement by Theresa May and Boris Johnson. With the next General Election expected in spring/summer 2024, placing my exhibition within the public's view ahead of this is essential. The exhibition aims to say enough is enough, and this window ahead of the election is the ideal time for the exhibition to reach an audience that is already politically aware due to increased news coverage. Ahead of general elections, there is typically six weeks known as the pre-election period¹¹³, described as a period of sensitivity in politics. Pre-election is in place to reduce the risk of any abuse of power¹¹⁴ and allows society to form an opinion at their merit. During these six weeks, I would expect my exhibition to take place – whilst MPs are out lobbying their constituents and it is in the forefront of voters' minds. It is, however, illegal to sway someone's vote¹¹⁵; so, the exhibition must not actively contain anything encouraging the viewer to vote a certain way. I have allowed these artworks to come together and speak for themselves on the topic with very little writing about the election on site, I have included both Labour and Tory images within the works to mitigate this. This way, the viewer takes in the artwork and votes on their own accord; the aim is not to sway one way or another, but to encourage those who view it to react to the art. I have to be mindful, for all of the flaws that I believe it has, the Conservative Government has been voted in repeatedly by the British public. Combine this with the notion that British elections are essentially a two-party race, with neither Labour nor Tory being any better than the other in the eyes of the public. The nature of *Enough* is not to sway a vote but to encourage active participation in politics by the viewer. It does not provide the attendees with an answer on what is right or wrong but highlights the challenges this country has faced.

¹¹¹ The British Election Study Team, 'Age and voting behaviour at the 2019 General Election'.

¹¹² Bolton, 'General Election 2019: The impact of the weather on turnout'

¹¹³ Previously known as Purdah, this is the pre-election period where there are restrictions on communication activities, the term 'heightened sensitivity is often used during this time as explained on the Local Government Association Website, 'Pre-election Period'

¹¹⁴ Abuse of power means to misuse authority to gain unfair advantage.

¹¹⁵ Crimestoppers UK Website



Figure 10 – Glasgow Central Station concourse with crowd, April 2016. Photograph. Network Rail Website.

When considering the location for *Enough*, I want to encapsulate the feeling of politics being everywhere and consider how to bring the exhibition to as many people as possible. I need the exhibition's content to infiltrate the viewers' lives and make them stop to appreciate how artists responded to the political situations that should be familiar to them. A vital factor to the exhibition's success is its ability to bring these art pieces to as many viewers as possible in a place that is not an elite gallery that would require ticketing or queuing. Therefore, my exhibition is a popup on a railway station concourse. I imagine this exhibition will be replicated in many railway stations throughout Britain's major cities. However, I use Glasgow's Central Station [Fig. 10] as the primary location for this written piece. The concourse at Glasgow Central, and most central railway stations, is large enough to host the temporary exhibition and will no doubt become a talking point amongst commuters interacting with *Enough*. In 2018/19, Transport Scotland recorded 92 million users of trains in Scotland, with 40% (almost 37 million) of those journeys either starting or ending in Glasgow Central¹¹⁶. When compared to the population of 5.4 million in 2018¹¹⁷, this statistic translates to every person in Scotland having passed through the station at least

¹¹⁶ Scottish Transport Statistics, No. 39 2020 Edition p112

¹¹⁷ Figures on the National Records of Scotland website

twice in any six-week period – the length of time my exhibition would feature on the concourse. This footfall would draw a huge, varied audience to the exhibition over the six weeks, at a prime political time. As in the statistics above, these figures relate to those whose journey ended or started in Glasgow Central; I hope the viewers would have *Enough* fresh in their mind on their onward journey, discussing it further with whoever is on the other end, whether it is a friend, relative or an office full of colleagues.

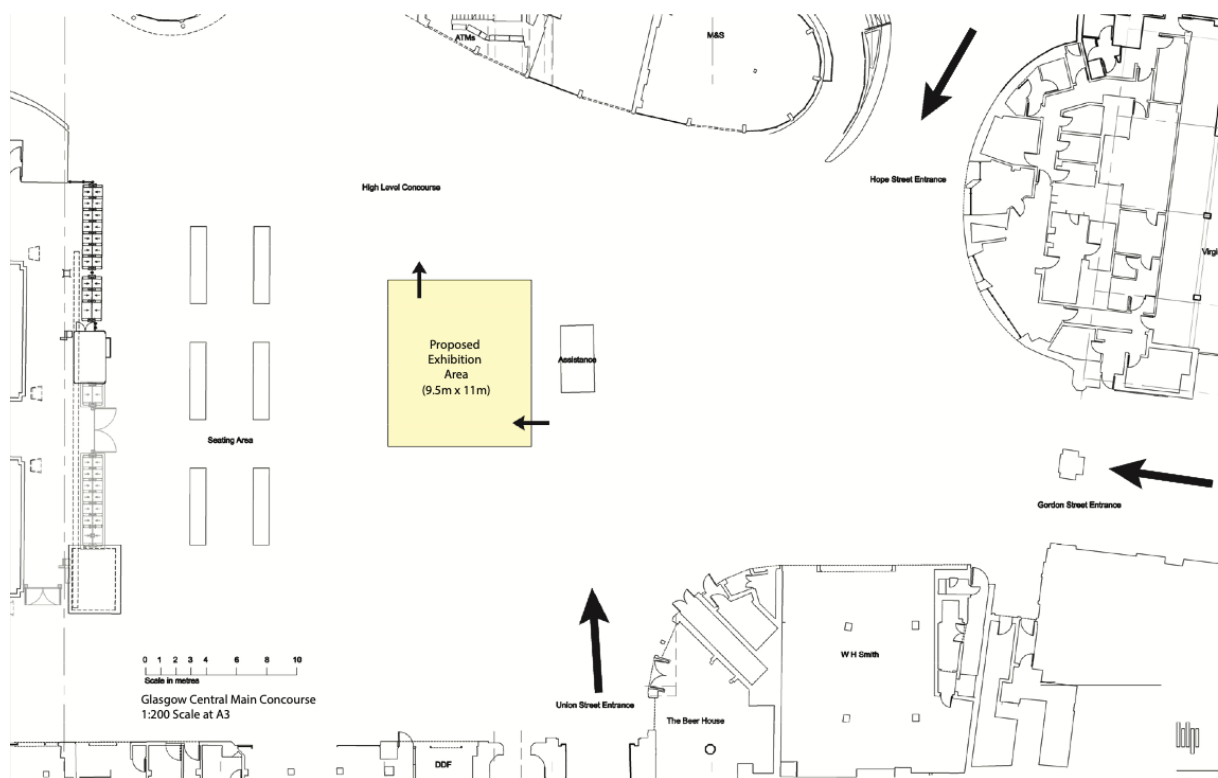


Figure 11 – Technical drawing of Glasgow Central Station main concourse, 2017. Glasgow City Council Planning Application Document Portal, Application 17/03247/DC, Drawing Reference 17081-GLC 01.

The location of *Enough* is central within the city, and although the key target audience is those who use the station itself, the location is accessible for anyone who frequents the city centre, well-lit and has all the amenities on site that could be required of an exhibition attendee: accessible toilets, places to get something to eat and places to sit. There is a lack of loud background music, and the general hustle and bustle noise will allow for a unique experience. Upon viewing the pop-up exhibition, the viewer will be able to hear the sounds of life rushing past in the busy station as they move from artwork to artwork. This adds to the atmosphere of the exhibition and reminds the viewer that life continues to happen regardless of the political decisions made by the Government or the voters, keeping their reality within their mind. The station concourse is vast and mostly open to allow for the movement of commuters. My exhibition will feature within this open space as a pop-up structure, located

behind the main seating area [Fig. 11] between the three entrances to catch as many commuters as possible as they enter. This is close to the seating area which will cause some disruption to the regular commuters; however, this is a desired effect of *Enough* in order to create interest in the sentiments of the exhibition. The area of the concourse selected is flat and will allow viewers to walk around the exhibition with ease, including wheelchair users. As this is a pop-up exhibition, the main structure will be made of temporary partition walls, allowing flexibility in many ways – the formation and shape of the exhibition can morph to suit the varied station concourses across the country, making the most of any platform. Of the selected artworks, many depend on their ability to be photographed and shared in the modern internet world to be successful, their messaging only truly effective when repeatedly reproduced by society. This means the original artworks do not need to be obtained, reducing the costs, security required and other ‘red-tape’¹¹⁸ issues surrounding temporary exhibitions. The temporary walls are white to allow the viewer to focus on the art in situ, sitting within the feelings of each piece without distraction. There will be no roof structure to the exhibition to allow for the natural light of the station to fill the space as well as the noise from the station to support the exhibition as described. There will be some supplementary lighting fitted to the walls within the structure to highlight the larger artworks.

¹¹⁸ The term ‘red tape’ refers to the rules surrounding processes that can often seem lengthy, unnecessary, and often cause delays.

Enough: Exhibition & Content Layout

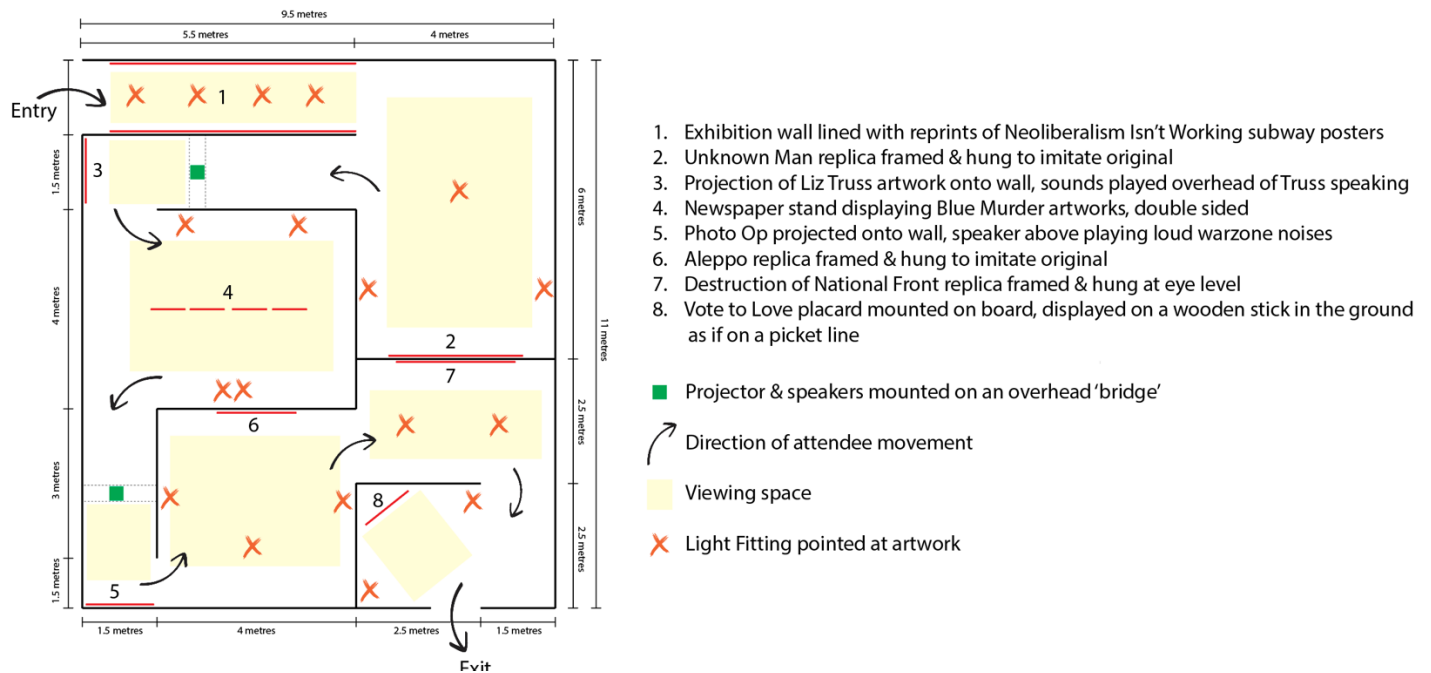


Figure 12 – Annotated illustration of proposed exhibition layout highlighting location of artworks and lighting, flow of viewer movement and viewing space given per each artwork.

The artworks in *Enough* have been placed in a way that both encourages the emotions of the viewer and honours the modernity of the medium in which the artworks were produced. The artworks do not feature in the same order they have been explored within this writing. I believe when rationalising their selection, my writing was logical and followed my defined guidelines of the selection process. In the exhibition, the artworks are placed in a manner that reinforces the narrative out with this literary explanation, maximising their effect through strategic placement. Each artwork is given the space it needs to be taken in by the viewer with varied levels of interaction across the collection. I want the viewers to feel themselves meandering through the space, winding in and out to mimic the complexities of navigating politics. The pop-up site features long, narrow corridors with art works placed at the end or on the wall viewers walk by. This layout [Fig.12] takes the viewers on a journey by themselves through these corridors, echoing the idea that you are alone in your views on politics. Your vote is private and so is the emotional journey within *Enough*. Where I would have liked to design the space with tighter corridors to mimic the feeling of being in a polling booth by yourself, the need to have the space accessible for all was more important. The corridors are set to a 1500mm

width which is adequate for wheelchairs to manoeuvre with ease¹¹⁹. The space is designed in an almost labyrinth-like formation and features little to no comfort. Politics is uncomfortable and often difficult to talk about and that is why there are no additional comforts within the pop-up exhibition such as soft lighting and seating. The viewers are encouraged to stand in their discomfort as they embrace the emotional artworks on display, even in the larger spaces that host the more traditional art works. Using these techniques, the viewers focus is drawn to the artworks within *Enough* and the emotions that stir within themselves.



Figure 13 – Image of 1:20 scale model showing entryway and first artwork. Printed artworks on 3mm white acrylic.

Upon entry, the viewers are met with a corridor lined in prints of Cullen’s *Neoliberalism Isn’t Working* [Fig. 3], each the size of a poster you would find overhead on the subway to honour the artists advertising influence. There are many copies,

¹¹⁹ Scottish Government, *Building Standards technical handbook 2017: Non-Domestic Buildings*, Section 4.2.2

pasted over one another in a hap-hazard fashion, creating an assault on the senses in the form of this new 'wallpaper' [Fig.13]. The artwork presented at the start of the pop up sets the tone, teasing the morbid nature of the artwork that lies deeper within. The illustrative and almost comical aspects of this artwork could lead to the into it being taken lightly by viewers, despite its serious underlying message. To reinforce the severe nature of the art on display, this corridor leads into a large space solely housing Currie's, *Unknown Man* [Fig.2]. This artwork is daunting, consuming most of the wall space available to it, and almost sinister on first viewing, sitting alone in this space, allowing the viewers to take in its size and tone. There is a feeling of uncertainty within the artwork, with questions pouring into your mind as Dame Sue Black stares into your soul: what is in the picture? Who under the sheet? What happened to them? What is the bucket for? These feelings of uncertainty and fear are the desired effect from the piece, leaving the viewer eager to move on.

The next corridor houses the first of two projected artworks. The introduction of the projector as a means of display is a nod to the modern nature in which the digital photomontage is produced. These artworks are typically made within a computer or iPad, designed for internet sharing, rarely leaving their digital domain. I want to honour this by projecting the digital artworks onto the wall at the end of the long corridors, the first on display being Cold War Steve's, *untitled* [Fig.7]. To add a third dimension to this digital display, I have included speakers in these corridors to support. British visual culture today heavily features video sharing as well as images so to include sound will resonate deeper with the public as they take in the static image. To provoke an emotional response from the viewers, the sound in this instance will be that of Liz Truss' resignation speech she gave on October 20th, 2022¹²⁰. Her speech was less than two minutes in which she stated:

I recognise though, given the situation, I cannot deliver the mandate on which I was elected by the Conservative Party. I have therefore spoken to His Majesty the King to notify him that I am resigning as leader of the Conservative Party¹²¹

¹²⁰ Reuters, 'Liz Truss Resignation: The full statement'

¹²¹ Ibid.

As the guests move through the exhibition and past Liz Truss, the fourth artwork comes into view in another room [Fig. 14], slightly smaller than the one before. The 24 pieces from *Blue Murder* [Fig.6] are placed in the centre of the room, in an old newspaper stand that allows the viewers to move around the artwork, getting as close as they like. I want to ensure the viewers can see and feel the raw emotion of the rips and tears created within each piece by the artist, of course, these will be commissioned replicas as already explained. These replicas have to be physical and carry the same ‘depraved material’ characteristics of the originals, to maintain the concept. It is unusual to have permission to touch or interact with art in an exhibition for fear of damages, however in this instance, the closer interaction is encouraged. Where there is no clear indication that the art can be touched throughout the show, there are no consequences if the viewers decide to do so as they are replica pieces. This is a play on the intricacies of democracy – the feeling that your vote doesn’t matter because your just one person and you cannot make a change. The same if you were to touch an art piece hanging in a museum, if just one person touched it surely no damage would be done but if everyone touched it, would it change?



Figure 14 – Image of 1:20 scale model showing corridor with *Photo Op* projected at the opposite end. Printed artworks on 3mm white acrylic.

The next corridor houses the second of the projected artworks, Kennard Phillips' *Photo Op* [Fig. 8]. The noises in the corridor to accompany the artwork are the background noises from a warzone¹²², noises of helicopters, gunshots, and explosions. This background noise appears as if from nowhere, guaranteed to give the viewers a fright. War is invasion and this sudden noise overhead will act as an invasion of the senses for those who move through the noisy corridor, rendering them hyper aware of their surroundings and feeling uneasy as they move through to the next room. The next room is larger, allowing the user to breathe as they leave the sensory experience of the previous corridor. Saville's *Aleppo* [Fig. 4] hangs in this room, with space to stand and view the piece, taking in the size and sadness.



Figure 15 – Image of 1:20 scale model showing room containing *Aleppo* and the viewers journey on to *Destruction of the National Front*. Printed artworks on 3mm white acrylic.

¹²² A combination of war sound ASMR compiled using existing recordings online.

The final two artworks are displayed in smaller passing places to leave lasting sentiments within the viewer as they leave the exhibition. The first is Chambers *Destruction of the National Front* [Fig. 1], hung in a short corridor just as long as the artwork that the viewers pass by, allowing a close look at the materials used. The artwork is placed here to allow for a reminder of the horrors of the previous artworks and assigns almost a sense of ownership to Britain with the sudden appearance of the British flag in this setting. Of course, as the British flag in this piece is slowly torn apart and reformed into a swastika, the viewer can put together their own assumptions at what the carefully placed piece is hinting at. As they move round the corner, the final piece of artwork comes into view by the exit. A slightly lighter hearted piece in relation to the previous works, Banksy's *Vote to Love* [Fig. 5] is placed as a placard is originally intended, on a wooden plank as if to be held by a protester. This final lasting sentiment of the exhibition places ownership of the future into the viewers hand as the words vote and love are the last to be seen. Hopefully, this artwork reminds the viewers that politics, in theory, is of their own design by the use of their vote and they can use their voice to 'break the system' like graffiti or protest does. This final piece should remind the viewer that the power is in their hands and, on reflection of what they have seen, they should feel a sense of shame at the actions of the Government as they leave are instantly returned to their normal life within the station they use to commute.

Conclusion

Through research of British political history and its relation to the artistic responses of contemporary creators, this extended curatorial practice has considered the question, *is all art political?* As outlined in Part One, with support from the varied writings of multiple art critics and historians, it is clear that there is no simple answer to this question. My view on the question, given the research analysed throughout this writing, has led me to believe that context is the defining factor to the political nature of an artwork. I demonstrate this in Part One, through the analysis of one artwork in particular – *Unknown Man*, by Ken Currie. This artwork is not a directly political piece however, when placed amongst the other highly political artworks in curatorial practice, it aligns with the messaging. This importance of context was compared to Chambers' *Destruction of the National Front*. This piece is visually extremely political and makes a statement against some area of British culture however, it isn't until we read into Chambers' motivation behind the piece that we understand the exact issue it targets.

Curators exist to communicate a narrative through the collective context created by bringing varied voices together. It is interesting to consider how the nature of political art could be flipped if the narrative was different. If politics was considered successful in Britain, how differently would artists respond? Would it be possible to present a collection of political art in a way that could depoliticize their messaging? I don't believe so as I have clearly highlighted through this writing: artists are not complacent with the actions of the government and their responses echo this. Art can only respond realistically to events and artists exist to question the actions of the government, such as Jenny Saville's *Aleppo*. Part Two of this ECR successfully explores and demonstrates the forms of expression artists assume to convey their responses. If the actions of the British Government were desirable for the country, I believe art would take on a different form. If art was created to praise the government, it would paint an image of heroism rather than that of sarcastic satire and angry protest. This notion is hard to imagine considering how conditioned we are as a society to make light of the political landscape through artists such as Banksy and Cold War Steve. Could a heroic image of a government leader really be taken

seriously in British visual culture? Political art repeatedly questions the government critically and on behalf of society, holding their decisions accountable. If that were not the case, how different would British art look? Would it venture down the route of looking kitsch? It is clear that the question of all art being political does not have a simple answer, in fact, it creates more questions.

Throughout Part Three, I stress the importance of bringing *Enough* to as much of the target viewer as possible as a vital factor to the success of the exhibit. The chosen location supports this wholeheartedly although a deeper explanation of the exact target user could be included. Other key design decisions made to ensure visibility of the exhibition include the pop-up nature of the structure and the use of replicas of the art works. These decisions allow the exhibition to be repeated across the country, bringing it to as many major cities in the UK as possible. I believe in the way it has been designed, this exhibition could realistically take place. There is a flexible and cost-effective nature to the material chosen for the walls and using replicas alleviates security concerns. The exhibition is consciously designed to be accessible and with the flexibility the walls offer, the space will remain accessible in whichever shape it takes place in other stations. The timing of the exhibition is strong and supports the political agenda at the core of the curation.

Writing this extended curatorial rationale has been an exciting research process that I have thoroughly enjoyed. I believe research has informed and supported my decisions throughout. I have held my preconceptions and personal opinions of the government at a distance, allowing myself to stand back and take a research-based, objective view on the question. One of the challenges I found during the research period was the quality of sources available to me surrounding modern art. There is a vast range of academic sources that cover art and art history, however, in the modern 'internet' era, literary writing and physical books on the topic are few and far between. The recent decline in the state of politics has not yet been documented by writers as it has happened so quickly, I look forward to reading more in the future when enough time has passed to allow authors to produce critical writing on the political landscape and artistic expression.

Bibliography

Adams, Tim., "A beautiful outpouring of rage': did Britain's biggest ever protest change the world?' *The Guardian, Politics Past*, 11 February 2023 <<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/feb/11/slugs-iraq-war-london-protest-2003-legacy>> [Accessed January 2024]

Alliez, Eric, and Peter Osborne, *Spheres of Action: Art and Politics*, (London: Tate, 2013)

Amundsen, Heidi Bale, and Gerd Elise Morland, *Curating and Politics beyond the Curator: Initial Reflections*' (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2015)

Anon., '9 Famous Moments in British Protest History', *Oxford Royale Academy Article*, n.d. <<https://www.oxford-royale.com/articles/9-moments-british-protest-history/>> [Accessed Jan 2024]

Anon., 'Banksy Opens New Exhibition 'Cut and Run' at Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow', *Art Plugged Article*, 15 June 2023. <<https://artplugged.co.uk/banksy-opens-new-exhibition-cut-and-run-at-gallery-of-modern-art-glasgow/>> [Accessed Jan 2024]

Anon. 'Blue Murder: kennardphillips opening exhibition', *Metal Magazine*, April 2013, <<https://metalmagazine.eu/post/blue-murder-kennardphillips-opening-exhibition>> [Accessed January 2024]

Anon., 'Did Banksy get into the Summer Exhibition?', *Royal Academy Website*, 12 June 2018, <<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/article/banksy-250-summer-exhibition>> [Accessed November 2023]

Anon., 'History of Advertising No 90: 'Labour isn't working' poster', *Campaign Online Article*, 20 February 2014. <<https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/history-advertising-no-90-labour-isnt-working-poster/1281255>> [Accessed November 2023]

Anon., 'New Labour', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, Last updated 17 January 2024, <https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=New_Labour&oldid=1196415691> [Accessed 17 January 2024]

Anon., 'The BLK Art Group', *London Tate Modern*, n.d, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/b/blk-art-group> [Accessed February 2024]

Anon., 'The New Glasgow Boys', *Essential School of Painting Website, London Art School*, n.d. <<https://theessentialschoolofpainting.com/the-new-glasgow-boys-2/>> [Accessed January 2024]

Anon., 'The impact of technology on art', *ArtThou Editorial*, n.d. <https://www.artthou.co.uk/editorial/technology-on-art> [Accessed February 2024]

Anon., 'What is Contemporary Art?', *Artsper*, n.d. <<https://www.artsper.com/gb/cms/collector-guide/art-history/what-is-contemporary-art#:~:text=Contemporary%20art%20follows%20from%20modern,a%20radical%20break%20from%20modernism.>>> [Accessed November 2023]

ArtBuzz Website <<https://www.artbuzz.in/pages/about-us-1>> [Accessed December 2023]

ArtBuzz., 'Political Art', *ArtBuzz.in, Art Terms*, April 2021, <<https://www.artbuzz.in/blogs/art-term/political-art>> [Accessed December 2023]

Balzer, David, and Hans-Ulrich Obrist, *Curationism: How Curating Took over the Art World and Everything Else*, (London: PlutoPress, 2015)

Banksy, *Cut and Run – 25 years card labour*, (Cut & Run Productions LTD: 2023)

Baumgardner, Julie., 'The Most Iconic Artists of the 1970's', *Artsy.net*, 11 August 2015 <<https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-the-most-iconic-artists-of-the-1970s>> [Accessed December 2023]

BBC News Article., 'MPs allege bullying during chaotic fracking vote' *BBC News Website*, 20 October 2022 <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-63322533#>> [Accessed February 2024]

BBC News., 'Boris Johnson's final speech as UK Prime Minister' *BBC News, YouTube Video Recording of Speech*, 6 September 2022 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Gf5X1BC7tY>> [Accessed December 2023]

BBC News., 'RAF killed 4,000 fighters in Iraq and Syria', *BBC News Article*, 7 March 2019 <<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47477197>> [Accessed January 2024]

Bennister, M., *Prime Ministers in Power Political Leadership in Britain, and Australia*, (1st ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2012)

Bergmann, Eirikur, *Conspiracy & Populism: The Politics of Misinformation*, (1st ed., Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018)

Bird, Michael, *Studio Voices: Art and Life in Twentieth Century Britain* (London: Lund Humphries, 2018)

Birgit, Bujard., *The British Prime Minister in the Core Executive: Political Leadership in British European Policy*, (1st ed., Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2018)

Bolton, Paul., 'General Election 2019: The impact of the weather on turnout' *Commons Library*, 13 January 2020 <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/general-election-2019-the-impact-of-weather-on-turnout>> [Accessed January 2024]

Botton, Alain de., 'The Problem with the Art Establishment', *HuffPost*, 9 October 2013 <https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/alain-de-botton/the-problem-with-the-art-establishment_b_4070824.html> [Accessed February 2024]

Bracknell News, 'Banksy artwork removed within hour of it being confirmed' *Bracknell News Online Article*, 28 December 2023 <<https://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/national/24008026.banksy-artwork-removed-within-hour-confirmed-authentic/>> [Accessed February 2023]

Breakwell, Ian., *Artist's thoughts on the seventies in words and pictures*, (Studio International: Vol 195, 1981)., p.11

Britannica (written by the Editors and Factcheckers) Thatcherism (n.d) <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Thatcherism>> [Accessed December 2023]

Button, Virginia., *The Turner Prize*, (4th ed., London: Tate, 2007)

Carmen, Julia., 'Destruction of the National Front' *Tate Modern Artworks*, November 2012 <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/chambers-destruction-of-the-national-front-t13887>> [Accessed December 2023]

Centre for Economic and Business Research, 'Contribution of the arts and culture industry to the UK Economy' *Report for Arts Council England*, April 2019 <<https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/research-and-data/contribution-arts-and-culture-industry-uk-economy#:~:text=The%20report%20highlights%3A,a%20year%20and%20363%2C700%20j obs.>> [Accessed January 2024]

Changing Roles: Artists' Personal Views and Wishes (Rotterdam: Witte de With, 2007)

Choi., 'Street Art Activism: What White People Call Vandalism', *Harvard Political Review*, 21 October 2020 <<https://harvardpolitics.com/street-art-activism/>> [Accessed January 2024]

Cold War Steve, About, *Artists own website* <<https://www.coldwarsteve.com/bio/>> [Accessed January 2024]

Colin, Anna, and Lydia Yee, *British Art Show 8* (London: Hayward Gallery Publishing, 2015)

Conte, Kari., Chris Evans., Jesse McKee., Florence Ostende., and Lisa Marei Schmidt., *Friends of the Divided Mind* (London: Royal College of Art, 2009)

Cooper, Jeremy., *Growing up: The Young British Artists at 50* (Munich: Prestel, 2012)

Coulter, Steve., 'Book Review: The Conservative Party from Thatcher to Cameron' (10 April 2011) <<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/book-review-the-conservative-party-from-thatcher-to-america/>> [Accessed December 2023]

Crimestoppers UK Website, 'Your vote is yours alone' (n.d) <<https://crimestoppers-uk.org/news-campaigns/campaigns/your-vote-is-yours-alone>> [Accessed February 2024]

Crow, Thomas E., *Modern Art in the Common Culture* (2nd ed., New Haven, Conn.; Yale University Press, 1998)

Cullen, Darren., Artists own website. <<https://www.spellingmistakescostlives.com>> [Accessed November 2023]

Cullen, Darren., Artists own website, about page. <<https://www.spellingmistakescostlives.com>> [Accessed November 2023]

Daily Star., 'The Moment Lizzy Lettuce outlasted Liz Truss as Prime Minister' *Daily Star, YouTube Video*, 21 October 2022 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taW_3T7QzUA> [Accessed November 2023]

Downey, Anthony., *Art and Politics Now* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2014)

Drury, Colin., 'How similar is Liz Truss to Margaret Thatcher?', *The Independent*, 3 September 2022 <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/liz-truss-margaret-thatcher-similarities-b2159085.html>> [Accessed January 2024]

Durant, Nancy., Cover Story, Issue 70990, p.8, *The Times*, 14th September 2013

Forgeard, Valerie., 'Behind the Artistic Boom: What contributed to the Resurgence of the Arts in the 1980's', *Brilliantio*, 6 July 2023 <<https://brilliantio.com/what-contributed-to-a-resurgence-of-the-arts-in-the-1980s/>> [Accessed January 2023]

Fuller, Peter., "Where was the art of the Seventies?" *Beyond the Crisis in Art*, (London: Writers and Readers, 1980) p16-43

Fuller, Peter, 'Where Was the Art of the Seventies?' (written 1980) *included on Laurence Fuller Art Website*, 11 March 2020. <<http://www.laurencefuller.art/blog/2017/1/2/beyond-the-crisis-where-was-the-art-of-the-seventies>> [Accessed December 23]

Gamble, Andrew, 'Britain's Eternal Decline', *The New Statesman Online*, 30 September 2023 <<https://www.newstatesman.com/the-weekend-essay/2023/09/britain-eternal-decline>> [Accessed March 2024]

Government Website 'PM takes action to stop disruptive protests', *Government website*: 16 January 2023 <<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-takes-action-to-stop-disruptive-protests>> [Accessed February 2024]

Groys, Boris., *Art Power*. (The MIT Press; 2008).

Hall, Sarah Marie., 'austerity has its own life – here's how it lives on in future generations', *The University of Manchester Website*, 2003 <<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/discover/news/austerity-has-its-own-life/#>> [Accessed December 2023]

Hare, Bill., *Scottish Artists in an Age of Radical Change*, (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2019)

Henry, Clare., 'Ken Currie: Unknown Man Scottish National Portrait Gallery', *Artlyst Website*, 24 May 2021 <<https://artlyst.com/features/ken-currie-unknown-man-scottish-national-portrait-gallery-clare-henry/>> [Accessed January 2024]

Heywood, Andrew., *Political Ideologies: An Introduction*, (3rd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Higgins, Charlotte., 'Culture is not trivial, it's about who we are', *The Guardian Online Opinions*, November 2023 <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/nov/26/culture-labour-plan-save-the-arts-tory-cuts>> [Accessed November 2023]

Hilliard, John., *British Art in the Seventies – a brief note*, (1988) Printed in John Hilliard, Ed. Uta Nusser (Heidelberg: Verglas Das Wunderhorn/Manchester: Cornerhouse, 1999)

Keep, Max., *The October 17th Fiscal Budget: Summary and Background* (House of Commons Library; 17 October 2022) <<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9643/#:~:text=Reversal%20of%20tax%20cuts,of%20corporation%20tax%20at%2019%25>> [Accessed November 2023]

Imperial War Museum North Website <<https://www.iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-north>>

Jones, Jonathon., 'This Man made Britart what it is. He would have hated it', *The Guardian Online Art and Design Section*, May 1999 <<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/1999/may/13/artsfeatures>> [Accessed November 2023]

Keep on Onnin': Contemporary Art at Tate Britain - Art Now 2004-7 (London: Tate, 2007)

Kennardphillips, Artists own website, About Page <<https://kennardphillips.org/about/>> [Accessed December 2023]

Kurzgesagt – 'In a Nutshell., The Internet is Worse Than Ever – Now What?', *Kurzgesagt YouTube Channel*, 29 November 2023 <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuFIMtZmvY0>> [Accessed February 2024]

Lasswell, Harold D., *The Theory of Political Propaganda*, (*The American Political Science Review*, vol. 21, no. 3, 1927) <<https://doi.org/10.2307/1945515>> [Accessed February 2024]

Local Government Association Website Pre-election Period (n.d) <<https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/communications-and-community-engagement/pre-election-period>> [Accessed January 2024]

MacAskill, Ewan and Borger, Julian., 'Iraq War was illegal and breached UN charter, Annan says', *The Guardian Online World News*, 16 September 2004 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/sep/16/iraq.iraq>> [Accessed January 2024]

Mach, K.J., Salas Reyes, R., Pentz, B. et al. *News media coverage of COVID-19 public health and policy information*. (*Humanit Soc Sci Commun* 8, 220: 28 September 2021) Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-021-00900-z>> [Accessed February 2024]

MadButt Studio., 'Digital Collage Trends: Exploring Styles and Techniques', *MadButt.com*, 22 January 2024 <<https://madbutt.com.au/2024/01/22/digital-collage-trends-exploring-styles-and-techniques/#:~:text=The%20prevalence%20of%20social%20media,that%20digital%20collage%20effortlessly%20meets>> [Accessed February 2024]

Maddox Gallery., 'The Banksy Effect' *Maddox Gallery Website*, 5 August 2020 <<https://maddoxgallery.com/news/97-the-banksy-effect-how-banksy-legitimised-street-art/>> [Accessed January 2024]

Mancini, Nate., 'No, All Art is Not Political' *Forefront Website*, 17 June 2018 <<https://forefrontfestival.com/all-art-is-not-political>> [Accessed December 2023]

McGrath, Dominic., 'Liz Truss rejects Margaret Thatcher comparisons: I am my own person', *The Independent Online*, 21 July 2022 <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/liz-truss-margaret-thatcher-house-of-commons-estonia-gb-news-b2128096.html>> [Accessed December 2023]

Miller, Phil., 'Jenny Saville unveils harrowing image of war in Syria in first ever Scottish show of her painting', *Herald Online Interview*, 23 March 2018 <<https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/16111220.jenny-saville-unveils-harrowing-image-war-syria-first-ever-scottish-show-painting/>> [Accessed Jan 2024]

Milliard, Coline, Rafal Niemojewski, Ben Borthwick, Jonathan Watkins, and Natasha Hoare., *The New Curator: Researcher, Commissioner, Keeper, Interpreter, Producer, Collaborator* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2016)

Nairne, Sandy., *Black Arts in the Maelstrom*, *History Workshop Journal*, Volume 61, Issue 1, (Oxford University Press, Spring 2006) <<https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbi062>> [Accessed December 2023]

- National Galleries Scotland., Jenny Saville, Aleppo (2020)
{<https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/163921>} [Accessed Jan 2024]
- National Records of Scotland website (2019)
<<https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/news/2019/scotlands-population-2018>> [Accessed January 2024]
- Obrist, Hans Ulrich, *A Brief History of Curating* (JRP: Ringier, 2008)
- Oxford English Dictionary, "Curation, n.". (Oxford University Press: September 2023)
<<https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/9213676740>> [Accessed November 2023]
- P, Silka., '1960s Art and the Age of Pop', *Widewalls Art History*, 14 November 2016
<<https://www.widewalls.ch/magazine/1960s-art>> [Accessed December 2023]
- Paton, Kirsteen, *Gentrification: A Working-Class Perspective* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014)
- Phil., 'Why do the Tories Hate the Arts?', *A Very Public Socialist Blog*, 10th October 2020
<<http://averypublicsociologist.blogspot.com/2020/10/why-do-tories-hate-arts.html>>
[Accessed November 2023]
- Pigment, The Last., 'How Social Media Changed Art', *Medium Website Blog Post*, 22 January 2021
<<https://thelastpigment.medium.com/how-social-media-changed-art-d9ddc8c12d83>> [Accessed February 2024]
- Quinn, Ruth-Blandina, *Distance, or intimacy? —The arm's length principle, the British Government, and the Arts Council of Great Britain* (International Journal of Cultural Policy: 1997)
- Raymond, Gino, *The 1970s and the Thatcherite Revolution: Crisis of Ideology or Control?* (Revue Française de Civilisation Britannique: 10 September 2016)
<<http://journals.openedition.org/rfcb/962>; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/rfcb.962>>
[Accessed February 2024]
- Reuters., 'Lizz Truss: The full statement' *The Guardian Online*, October 2022.
<<https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-pm-liz-truss-resigns-2022-10-20/>> [Accessed February 2024]
- Rorimer, Anne., *New Art in the 60s and 70s: Redefining Reality* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2001)
- Scott, Emily Eliza, and Kirsten Swenson., *Critical Landscapes: Art, Space, Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press: 2015)
- Scottish Government, *Building Standards technical handbook 2017: Non-domestic* (Scottish Government, Building Planning & Design: March 2017) ISBN: 978-1-78544-329-9
- Scottish Transport Statistics, No. 39 2020 Edition
<<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/49177/scottish-transport-statistics-2020-publication-final-version.pdf>> [Accessed January 2024]
- Smith, Terry., Maria Lind, and Hans-Ulrich Obrist., *Talking Contemporary Curating* (1st ed., New York, NY: Independent Curators International, 2015)

Thea, Carolee., Biographical Narrative artists own website,
<https://www.caroleethea.com/biographical-narrative> [Accessed November 2023]

Thea, Carolee., *On Curating: Interviews with Ten International Curators* (New York: D.A.P., 2009)

Trevor, Harris and O'Brien, Monia., *Preserving the Sixties Britain and the 'Decade of Protest'* (London, Palgrave Macmillan UK: 2014) <<https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137374103>>

Trussell Trust, End of Year Stats: Food Bank Statistics for Previous Financial Years with Regional Breakdown (graph) (n.d) <<https://www.trusselltrust.org/news-and-blog/latest-stats/end-year-stats/>> [Accessed Jan 2024]

UNISON., 'Shocking picture of austerity cuts to local services is revealed by UNISON' *UNISON website*, 6 December 2019
<<https://www.unison.org.uk/news/article/2019/12/shocking-picture-austerity-cuts-local-services-revealed-unison/>> [Accessed February 2024]

Vallen, Mark., 'Why All Art is Political', *Art for a Change Essays*, October 2004. <<https://art-for-a-change.com/content/essays/political.htm>> [Accessed December 2023]

Viveros-Fauné, Christian., *Social Forms: A Short History of Political Art* (New York: David Zwirner Books, 2018)

Walker, John Albert., *Left Shift: Radical Art in 1970s Britain* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002)

Williams, Raymond., *Culture and Society, 1780-1950* (Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1977)

Wikipedia contributors, 'Art of the United Kingdom', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, last updated 20 December 2023
<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Art_of_the_United_Kingdom&oldid=1190918806> [Accessed November 2023]

Wikipedia contributors, 'John A. Walker (art critic)', *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, last updated 25 May 2023
<[https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=John_A._Walker_\(art_critic\)&oldid=1156969831](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=John_A._Walker_(art_critic)&oldid=1156969831)> [Accessed November 2023]

Wodak, Ruth., *The Discourse of Politics in Action: Politics as Usual* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)